

## Objectives

- Identify the factors that caused President Johnson to increase American troop strength in Vietnam.
- Assess the nature of the war in Vietnam and the difficulties faced by both sides.
- Evaluate the effects of low morale on American troops and on the home front.



## Terms and People

- **William Westmoreland** – the American military commander in South Vietnam
- **napalm** – jellied gasoline that was dropped in canisters and exploded on impact, setting fire to large areas
- **hawk** – a supporter of Johnson's war policies
- **dove** – an opponent Johnson's war policies





## **What were the causes and effects of America's growing involvement in the Vietnam War?**

As the war escalated, America's leaders and soldiers found themselves in a quagmire.

Eventually the war weakened the American economy, divided the people, and eroded the nation's morale.





**In 1965,  
Johnson  
escalated air  
strikes against  
North Vietnam  
and increased  
the number of  
ground troops.**



**The U.S. plan, called Operation Rolling Thunder, was to Americanize the war effort.**

The U.S. would use its superior war technology to win the conflict quickly.

Johnson's advisers, including **William Westmoreland**, the American commander in Vietnam, supported the increased military presence.



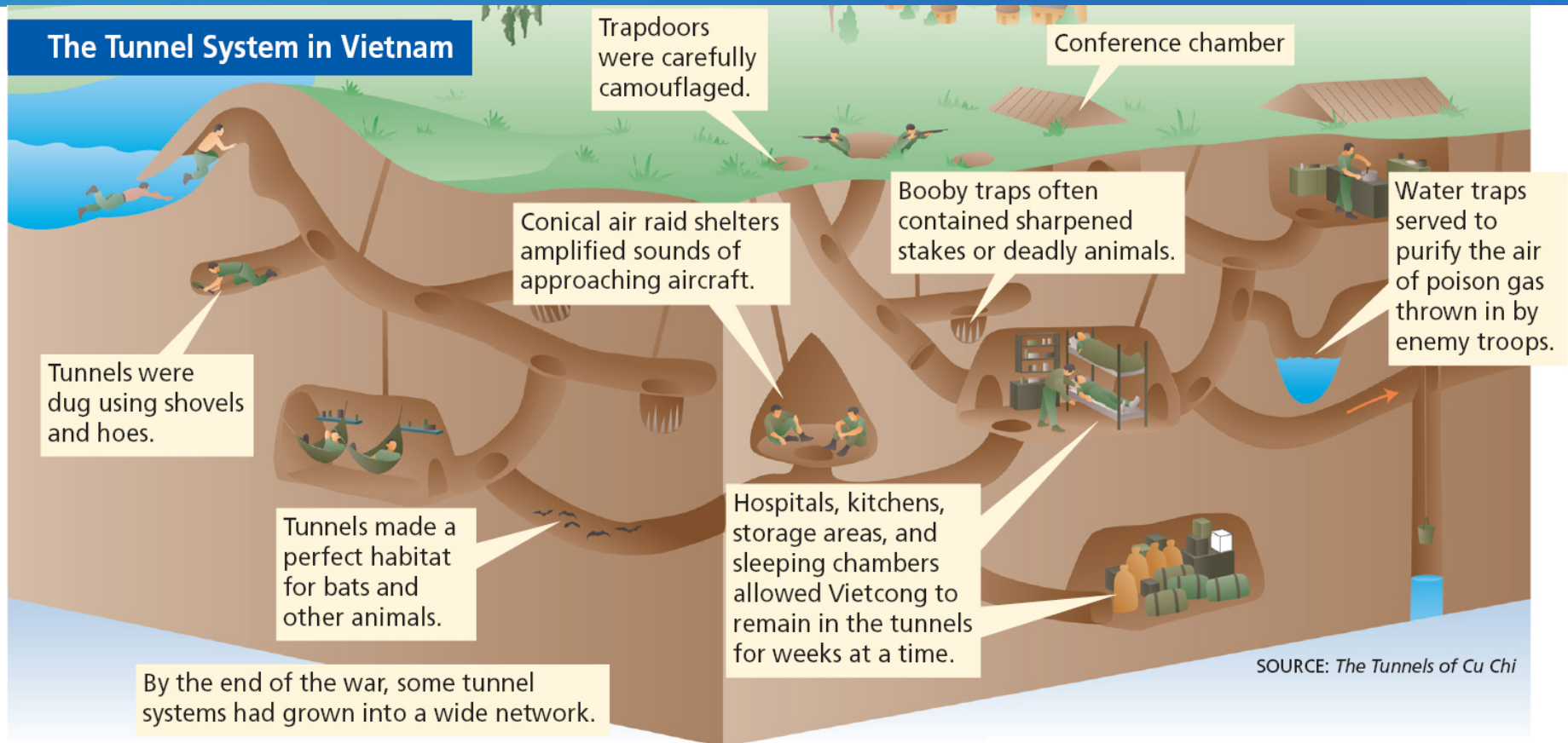
## The North Vietnamese and Vietcong fighters proved a difficult enemy.

Ho Chi Minh's military strategy was to **fight only when victory was certain.**

He exhorted his troops to be like a tiger fighting an elephant — the tiger keeps moving and takes bites out of the elephant.



The Tunnel System in Vietnam



The Vietcong and North Vietnamese dug a complex series of tunnels, from which they mounted surprise attacks. The U.S. dropped **napalm** to burn these jungle hideouts.



## The Vietcong and North Vietnamese soldiers:



- traveled quickly and quietly with little gear
- attacked suddenly and then faded into the jungle
- set booby traps around U.S. encampments



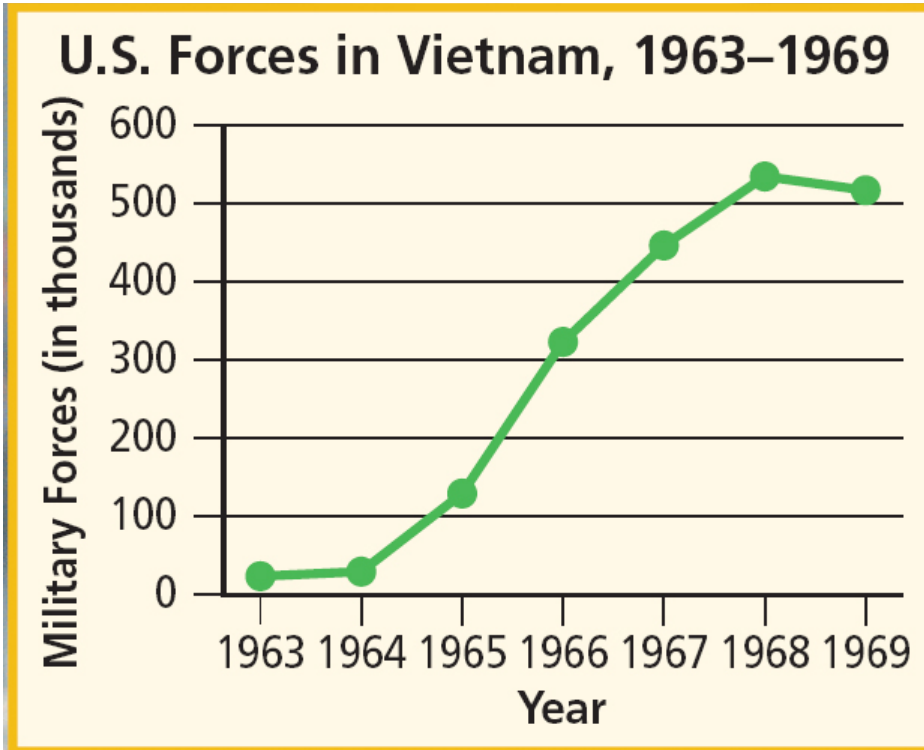


## The war grew increasingly difficult and frustrating.

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- Many American soldiers had been drafted and did not see how the war helped U.S. interests.
- The **lack of progress toward victory** in Vietnam increased doubt about the war.
- The **war strained America's economy**.





Source: U.S. Department of Defense,  
*Military Personnel Historical Reports*

**By 1968, there were more than half a million U.S. troops in Vietnam, and 30,000 had died.**

**Doves**

questioned the war. They included liberal politicians and students who saw the conflict as a localized civil war.



**Hawks** supported Johnson's war policies. They were mostly conservatives who believed the war was crucial to a U.S. Cold War victory.



## Section Review

### QuickTake Quiz



### Know It, Show It Quiz

